

I am extremely concerned regarding Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to require their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election, even if it is a "watered down" version and especially because now it is being packaged inside a "news program," potentially misleading thousands of viewers who do not recognize editorializing over news reporting. Overall, Sinclair's actions are a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. I fail to see how presenting completely biased one-sided accounts without critically looking at both candidates serves the public interest. Infomercials are required to purchase and pay for air time. Infomercials related to the election would be regulated by campaign laws. Sinclair has maneuvered to skirt these regulations set up to ensure a fair election process. When large companies control the airwaves, we the people lose out because objectivity can be swallowed up by the interests of a small family's political agenda. The stations in question operate more out of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Clearly, in a heated political year such as this it is possible to see that such a broadcast serves at best only a portion of the overall population. Furthermore, control over the content and airing of that programming is not available at the local level. It is far more important that we see real people from our own communities, careful analysis of the issues and more substantive news about issues that matter. Inflammatory rhetoric serves no one.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.